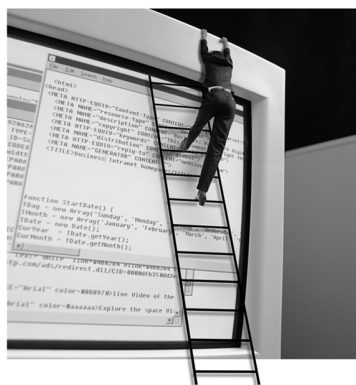
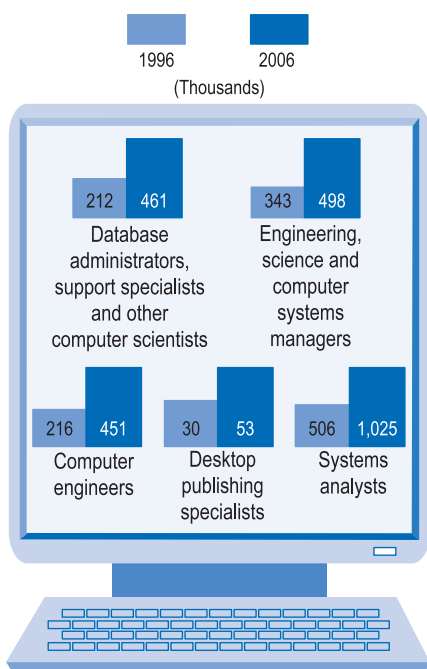


► **CAT'S CLIMBING:** The Center for Applied Technology's catalog due out in October boasts 35 new courses.



SNAPSHOTS

Employment in Information Technology Jumps



(Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics)

COVER STORY

Wanted: WebMasters in the Making

With the explosion of the Internet and electronic commerce, demand for WebMasters has skyrocketed. In response, Evening Programs and the Center for Applied Technology have set up WebMaster certificate programs for prospective experts.

Who will want to earn a certificate?

"People who have some computer experience and are interested in breaking into the Internet field," says Stefan Gunther, the program manager in Evening Programs responsible for developing the curriculum.

For those looking for evening and weekend classes, 12 core courses and one elective course are required for the Evening Program's certificate. Their certificate program spans the gamut of Web development and server expertise by building technical skills needed for Web authoring and the installation and running of UNIX-based Web servers.

CAT's program is structured differently. Their WebMaster certificate requires three sequential levels of certification, encompassing 12 courses taught during business hours.

► Web Publisher I concentrates on Web site administration and management.

► Web Developer I focuses on creating, managing and publishing a Web site and making it interactive.

► Web Server Development centers on programming, maintaining servers and the installation of Web server software.

According to Tommy Schwartz, a Web instructor, CAT's applied course experience sets this program apart. For each level, participants need to pass a

written exam and complete a hands-on project.

► Hot IT issues, p. 2

The certification has already attracted interest. "Now that we've got it out, people are calling every day," says Nat Hopkins, CAT's director.

It's a sign of the future. "The Internet is a network that brings together all segments of societies across the world," says Schwartz, who predicts that with a new bandwidth, videoconferencing and e-commerce will take off. "We're going to be doing almost all of our business in a different way."



INQUIRY

Harold F. Gracey Jr., acting chief information officer at the Department of Veterans Affairs, has forged ahead. As the first head of the new Office of Information and Technology, he oversees the operation of the VA's computer systems and telecommunication networks, which handle medical information, veterans benefits payments, life insurance programs and financial management systems. The wide area network he manages interconnects three centralized data centers, 172 medical centers, 58 benefits offices, and more than 600 outpatient facilities and 200 counseling centers.

Gracey has earned both the President's Meritorious and Distinguished Executive Rank awards. He joined the Graduate School's General Administration Board in June. We talked to him about information technology issues.



On IT changes in the federal government: The lead time on information technology projects 15 years ago was years of development. Now with the Web-based solutions, it's weeks or months. The second biggest change is in the procurement world with governmentwide contracts. It used to take 18 months to get folks on board to help. Now you can do it in three months once you have an idea.

On the proposal to grade computer security: Computer security is the next big issue after Y2K. If it weren't for Y2K, it would be the No.1 issue. Grading? I'm not sure. While I don't enjoy oversight, I do think it helps keep us focused on the right areas. There's significant vulnerability in our system given that we've networked everything together.

On security training: No. 1 in the training arena is awareness of vulnerabilities and the importance of safeguarding and changing your password regularly, and of being concerned about how you access outside systems. We put together a budget initiative for a thorough security program and a big chunk of it is aimed at training human resources, from individual users to system security officers.

On delivering Web services: There is a law that mandates that we provide answers electronically to benefits claims by early in the next millennium. We're experimenting in different ways with Web technology in front of our legacy systems. As we deal more with folks who are Web-enabled, they will want that ready access because that's

the way they deal with retailers, banks and other financial institutions. They are going to expect that of government.

On Web training: It's a new world in application development where we have a talent shortage – people who have designed secure Web access in a way that's comfortable and easy to use, high-class. It's the next big occupation. If I were young, and were looking for an upward career path, that's what I would focus on.

On chief knowledge officers: I don't know enough about it yet to know if it's a trend or a fad. Frankly, CIOs are still earning their stripes and proving their value. I hate to see that CIO job get diluted or confused by pulling off a piece of the function and putting it in the chief knowledge officer's hands. But the key issue is not how we mechanically handle information; it's how we use it. It's important that someone, either the CIO or a chief knowledge officer, focus on data validity and consistency.

On state-of-the-art IT innovations: We are in the middle of mapping a strategic plan for the department for the next 10 years. That's hard to do in technology because things change so fast. People will expect to get government service by the year 2005, 2010 the same way they get banking services through ATMs now. They will expect to have a card that identifies them and an ATM-like machine or a kiosk or maybe their own phone or some device in their house to get what they want – whether it's IRS, Social Security, veterans' benefits, whatever. The trend is toward a pervasive, almost utility-like system where you have a common network and interface and access to all the data that you need.

On future hot IT areas: Clearly networking. Everybody will need more access, and it's not going to be with standard telephone lines that we see now. You're going to see in work places and then homes, the ability to move more data and images faster. It may go to wireless, satellite, who knows?

On how IT workers can prepare for changes: Stay flexible because it's impossible to say now what skill other than the ability to learn you'll need in two, five or 10 years. To survive you're going to have to be in a constant cycle of learning because the pace of change has accelerated so much that it's impossible to be static.

TRAINING

CAT Goes Bilingual

¿Quiere Usted una introducción a Windows, Word, Excel, PowerPoint o el Internet? This fall, the Center for Applied Technology will offer for the first time five computer courses in Spanish.

"It just hit me at a faculty workshop," says Judy Tabachow, program manager for CAT. "I really feel there's a tremendous need and a world of opportunity out there."

Karen Penn de Martinez – a CAT instructor who has conducted computer training in Mexico, Chile and Ecuador – jumped right in. Martinez, a 1999 Faculty Excellence Award winner, will be the lead instructor for the courses she developed with Tabachow. The one- and two-day workshops cover the basics for those in the Washington, D.C., area who prefer to learn computer skills in Spanish.

"There are several communities who might be interested," explains Martinez, ticking them off. "There are the Spanish-speaking diplomatic and business communities who are more comfortable taking courses in Spanish. And then the immigrant community that doesn't know much about computers and are thinking about getting one for their kids. And then Spanish-speaking employees who have to adapt in their jobs."

Then there's the last reason: "It might be nice to put the Graduate School on their resume."

Desktop Publishing Takes Off

For wordsmiths or others with a creative visual bent, the Graduate School's Center for Applied Technology has launched a way to harness budding talent. In a desktop/electronic publishing certificate program that will kick off in October in Washington, D.C., students will be offered three tracks: graphics, page layout or Web tools.

"Participants can choose a direction," explains Judy Tabachow, program manager for CAT, who designed the program as a series. "The only prerequisites are a minimum typing speed, word processing classes and Windows courses."

Four new courses have also been added to boost the curriculum – *Materials and Techniques in the Graphic Arts*, *Adobe Illustrator*, *Macromedia Freehand* and *Digital Scanning*.

"What we've tried to do is design a curriculum that focuses more on real world uses, not just concepts," says Matthew Langley, a CAT instructor, noting that he's seen a burgeoning interest in desktop/electronic publishing courses from writers, editors and administrative support staff.

Any plans to go nationwide? "We'll take our show on the road in a heartbeat," says Tabachow.



UPDATES

Well-Organized All Around



The Graduate School's Conference Management has done it again – this time for 1,959 attendees. The three-day First Annual GSA Smart Pay Conference took place in August in Nashville, Tenn. Five banks joined GSA in providing training at the world famous

Opryland Hotel. The reaction? "The feedback was that it was a well-organized, first-class conference, the location was outstanding and training needs were met," reports Sharon Barcellos, conference manager. This was the largest of 14 conferences that Conference Management has completed this year.

Faculty Applauded

About 130 attendees – employees, faculty, board members, and award winners and their families – gathered in the South Agriculture building's Jefferson Auditorium in September to honor the recipients of the Graduate School's 1999 Faculty Excellence Award. The award winners were Kerry Bowles, Deborah Deichman, Terri Greenberg, Mary L. Harris, Jeffrey Hylton, F. David Lambert, Randy L. LeGrand, Karen Penn de Martinez, Silvia Radwan and Patricia Rush. Perry Broadus and Joanne W. Griggs received the Director's Awards for their work as advisory committee members. Charles Karelis, board member and president of Colgate University, gave the keynote address.

Did You Know?

By 2005, we will see a shortage in the United States of more than one million IT workers, according to the Web publication *MainFunction*.

Office of the Director

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WHAT'S NEW

AMERISCHOOL OFF TO A FINE START:

The Graduate School has signed its first online learning agreement with the Department of Agriculture's Office of Civil Rights. AmeriSchool will teach approximately 60,000 USDA employees across the country about equal employment opportunity programs. The online training will be available by April 2000.

NEW NCTC COURSES COMING UP: The National Capital Training Center will introduce three courses for retirement counselors and benefits specialists.

- ▶ Computation of Federal Benefits, November 17-19
- ▶ Counseling Skills for Benefits Specialists, February 9-10 and July 10-11
- ▶ Social Security for Federal Employees, May 17-19

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY'S AUGUST GRADS:

- ▶ The New Leader Program completed its second 1999 session with a bang when 170 participants graduated in Hunt Valley, Md. September marks the start of the third session.
- ▶ The Women's Executive Leadership Program – now the Executive Leadership Program for Midlevel Employees – hailed the end of this year's program with a graduation ceremony for 275 participants in Baltimore, Md.
- ▶ The LDA will host an Alumni Day for all graduates and participants at the Omni Hotel in Washington, D.C., on December 8. For more information, please call (202) 314-3580.

NEW MEMBER COMES ON BOARD: Nancy Killefer, the Treasury Department's assistant secretary for management and chief financial officer, joined the General Administration Board in July. Before her work at Treasury, Killefer served as a director of the consulting firm McKinsey & Company in Washington, D.C., where she specialized in enhancing organizational effectiveness and developing market strategies.

DATE SET FOR ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE: The Graduate School, USDA's Dimensions of Leadership conference for senior executives and managers will be held at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C., on December 9, 1999. Please call (202) 314-3580 for more information.

